BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca

Issue: 08-37 September 12th, 2008

- **Exports slip in July, ending a three-month-long upturn**
- **Housing starts down 10.5% in August**
- **Cost of new housing continues to climb**

The Economy

- **The value of BC origin exports stalled (-3.1% *seasonally adjusted*) in July, following three consecutive months of increases.** Energy exports declined 5.8%, reflecting the effect of lower export prices for gasoline. Shipments of industrial & consumer (-9.4%) and agriculture & fishing (-3.0%) products were also down from June. However, forestry (+4.0%) and machinery & equipment (+0.6%) exports showed more promise. Exports to the US were off 4.1%, as shipments of energy (-16.1%), agriculture & fish (-4.5%) and machinery & equipment (-2.1%) all slipped. Increases in exports of forestry (+1.3%), and industrial & consumer products (+4.3%) south of the border were unable to offset the declines. Shipments to destinations other than the US fell 2.0%, largely because of a sharp downturn in exports of industrial & consumer (+20.7%) products.

  Canadian exports (+2.2%) continued to rise in July, with shipments of industrial goods (+5.0%) and machinery & equipment (+6.6%) among those fuelling the growth. Trade in some other goods, including energy (-1.5%) and agriculture & fishing (-2.1%) products, slowed in July.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **Housing starts in the province showed continued volatility in August, falling 10.5% (*seasonally adjusted*), more than reversing a 4.8% climb in the previous month.** Canadian starts were up 13.1%, with many provinces posting double-digit growth. PEI (+75.0%) and Newfoundland (+72.2%) recorded the most substantial rises, but a 51.7% upsurge in Ontario had the biggest impact on the national increase. Starts were off in Quebec (-1.4%), Nova Scotia (-2.9%) and Alberta (-21.0%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **The value of building permits issued in British Columbia slipped 19.0% (*seasonally adjusted*) in July, as planned spending on both residential (-7.1%) and non-residential (-37.6%) projects declined.**

  In Abbotsford, permits were up 52.6%, one of the most significant increases in the country. However, Kelowna (-34.1%), Vancouver (-32.3%) and Victoria (-1.9%) all posted decreases.

  Nationally, permits climbed 1.8% with increases in other provinces ranging from 3.0 % in Ontario to 58.0 % in Manitoba. Other than BC, three provinces posted declines in July, the most notable of which was in New Brunswick (-21.7%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Year-to-date, building permits were 6.6% lower than in the first seven months of 2007, with decreases in four regions including Mainland/Southwest (-10.4%), where the drop in the value of permits reflected significantly lower spending on residential and commercial projects.** The decline in Vancouver Island/Coast (-12.1%) was concentrated in the institutional and residential sectors. Permits were also off in Cariboo (-3.5%) and Nechako (-3.9%). Other regions of the province fared better, with planned spending on new projects increasing most notably in North Coast (+34.5%), where the value of residential permits soared (+72.6%). Kootenay (+22.1%), Northeast (+10.2%) and Thompson/Okanagan (+9.0%) also saw permits

Report Crossing the Border: How Americans Travel to British Columbia

Did you know...
Only 38% of students in BC who are currently attending college or university plan to graduate debt free. *Source: Ipsos Canada*

rise in the first seven months of the year.
Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **The cost of new housing in BC's biggest metropolitan centre continued to climb in July.** Vancouver's New Housing Price Index was 1.6% higher than in July 2007, reflecting rising land values (+2.5%) and housing costs (+0.9%). New housing costs in the capital region, on the other hand, were relatively flat (-0.1%), as declining land prices (-0.4%) offset a similar increase (+0.4%) in the cost of housing. Saskatchewan continued to drive up the national index (+2.7%), with Regina (+29.6%) and Saskatoon (+13.1%) posting hefty increases over July of last year. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Agriculture

- **The price BC farmers received for their agricultural commodities climbed (+4.7%) in June from the same month a year earlier.** The Farm Product Price Index (FPPI) was 113.0 (1997=100), down slightly from May levels, but still notably higher than in June of 2007. Substantial gains in crop prices (+7.3%) along with a more moderate increase in prices for livestock and animal products (+2.3%) resulted in the year-over-year increase. Nationally, crop prices were up 40.4%, continuing double-digit increases which began in November 2006. On the other hand, prices for livestock and animal products were 0.4% below their June 2007 level, the tenth consecutive year-over-year decline. However, the strength of the crop index more than offset weakness in livestock and animal products prices, and Canada's overall FPPI rose 17.7% in June. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Firearms

- **As of December 31st 2007, there were 862,994 registered firearms in British Columbia**. The province had approximately 212,390 valid firearms licence holders at the end of last year, suggesting an average of 4.1 guns per registered owner. Nation-wide, the number of registered guns has reached 7.2 million, approximately 110,000 more than recorded at the end of 2006. Nearly 2 million Canadians are licensed firearms holders. During 2007, initial application screening led to the refusal of 443 firearms licence applications and continuous-eligibility screening led to the revocation of 1,758 firearms licences. *Data Source: Canadian Firearms Center*

Retirement

- **Immigrants who arrived in Canada after 1990 are less likely than their Canadian born counterparts to receive financial retirement advice.** While almost three-quarters (73%) of Canadian born near-retirees (aged 45 to 59) typically receive financial advice from at least one source, this is the case for just half (50%) of post-1990 immigrants of the same age. Likewise, immigrants who have arrived since 1990 are less likely to report having an understanding of Canada's public retirement income programs.
Data Source: S.C. Cat. #11-008-XIE

The Nation

- **Capacity use by Canadian industries fell for the fourth straight quarter between April and June.** Industries operated at 78.9% of their full capacity during the second quarter, down from 79.6% at the beginning of the year. Twelve of the 21 industry groups in the manufacturing sector also saw lower capacity use, but the overall decrease in manufacturing (-0.5 percentage points to 76.7) was dampened by increases in the petroleum & coal and machinery industries. Production slowed at forestry & logging (-2.0 percentage points to 74.8%) and mining & oil & gas (-0.9 points to 78.6%) establishments. Utilization was also lower in the construction sector (-0.8 points to 83.1%).
Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **In the second quarter of 2008, labour productivity of Canadian businesses dropped (-0.2%) after falling in the previous two quarters (-0.6% each).** While the total number of hours worked inched up (+0.1%), the volume of output shrank (-0.2%) and, as a result, productivity too was down. On a per-hour basis, compensation to workers in Canada increased during the second quarter. Coupled with the decline in productivity, the cost of labour per unit of output rose 1.2%. Productivity in the US advanced 1.9% over the same period.
Data Source: Statistics Canada

***Infoline** Issue: 08-37*
September 12th, 2008

For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

Infoline Report

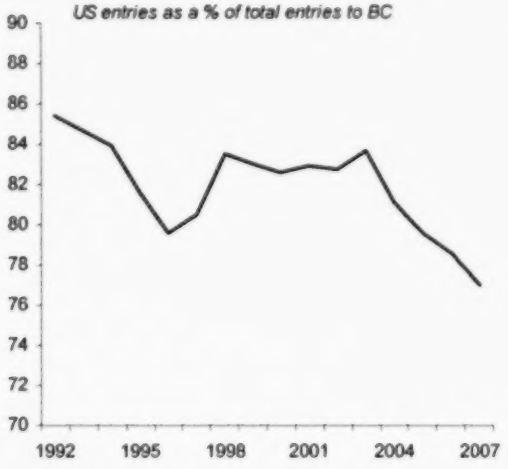
Contact: Lillian Hallin
250 387-0366
Originally published in
Tourism Sector Monitor Issue 08-07

Crossing the Border: How Americans Travel to British Columbia

Americans made more than five million visits to the province in 2007

Last year, 6.6 million non-resident visitors entered Canada through British Columbia. Of this total, 1.5 million (23%) came from overseas[1], primarily Asia (699,000) and Europe (519,000). While the US share of total entries is declining (it was about 85% in the early 1990s), the US is by far the biggest tourism market for BC, with 5.1 million entries (77%) in 2007.

Eight out of ten international visitors to BC come from the US



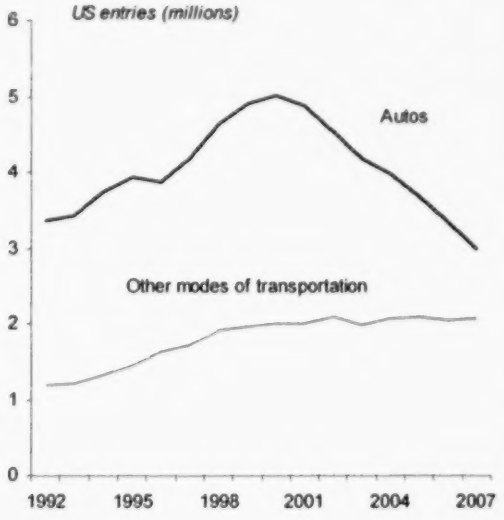
Data Source: Statistics Canada

How do Americans travel to BC?

Virtually all of the visitors who come to BC from overseas travel here by plane, but US residents who visit the province have many different options: they can drive, fly, travel by boat, train, motorcycle, snowmobile, or even cross the border on foot.

Not surprisingly, given the relatively easy land access to the province, most Americans who visit BC come here by car. Nearly three of the five million US visits to BC last year involved car trips. However, automobile entries have declined quite significantly since 2000, when they peaked at just over five million (and total entries from the US reached seven million).

Most Americans drive across the border into BC...

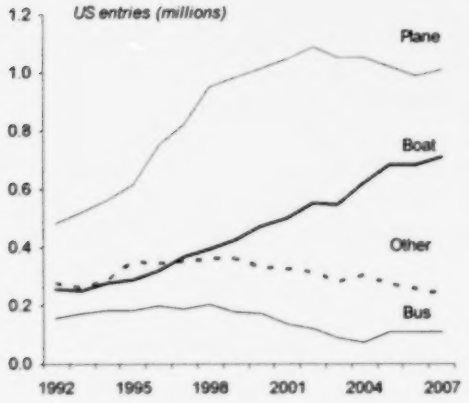


Data Source: Statistics Canada

[1] This includes Asia, Europe, Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and the Ocean Islands), Africa, and North & South America (except for the US).

The data in this article comes from Statistics Canada's International Travel Survey, and is based on information from customs documents filled out by the Canadian Border Services Agency.

...but other types of transportation are becoming increasingly important



Data Source: Statistics Canada

US travellers who do not drive over the border come to Canada by plane (20%), boat (14%), bus (2%) or by other means (5%). The number of Americans who fly into BC has increased significantly since the early 1990s, with more than a million passengers from the US arriving by plane in 2007. Vancouver International Airport, the main point of entry for travellers flying into BC, has seen the number of passengers travelling on trans-border flights (into and out of Vancouver) nearly double since 1992[2].

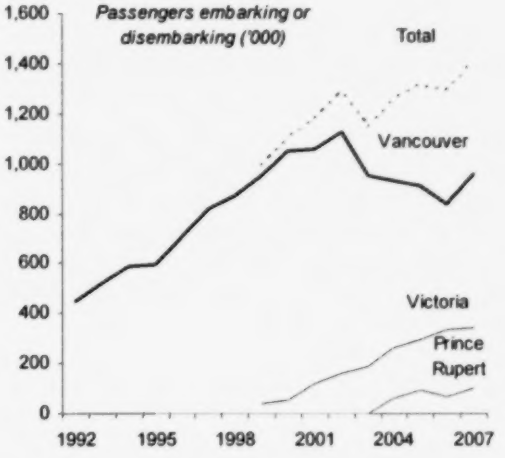
Boat traffic has increased significantly

Just over 708,000 Americans entered BC by boat in 2007, more than two-and-a-half times as many as in 1992. Americans can travel to BC on the Washington State ferry system, which carries passengers from Port Angeles and Anacortes to downtown Victoria and Sidney. As well, a private company operates a catamaran service between Seattle and Victoria. Finally, private boat traffic between US and Canadian ports brought just under 6,000 US visitors to BC in 2007.

Cruise ships that sail between Alaska and the west coast of the United States also make stops at one or more BC ports, since foreign-registered ships going between two US ports are required by American law to stop at a non-US port en route.

Cruise ship traffic has expanded significantly during the last decade and a half, and this is probably the main reason for much of the recent increase in US entries by boat. Vancouver has traditionally been the primary port visited by cruise ships, but a growing number of vessels are stopping at other ports as well. Last year, nearly a million (961,000) cruise ship passengers embarked or disembarked in Vancouver, while Victoria hosted 344,000 visitors and Prince Rupert had 100,000 visitors from cruise ships. While cruise ships carry passengers from many different countries, including Canada, many of them are American, and those who disembark in BC would be counted in the entries.

A growing number of cruise ship passengers are embarking or disembarking at BC ports



Data Source: Port Authority and Cruise BC websites

[2] This includes Canadians, Americans and residents of other countries travelling between the US and Canada.

Where do American motorists enter BC?

There are twenty different customs ports through which American motorists can enter the country. Of the eight regions in the province, five share borders, or have direct access to the US: Vancouver Island/Coast (via car ferry services), Mainland-Southwest, Thompson/Okanagan, Kootenay, and North Coast, which borders with Alaska.

Eighty percent of the auto traffic into BC enters via one of five border crossings in the Mainland/Southwest region. These include the crossing points at Aldergrove, Douglas, Huntingdon, and the Pacific Highway, as well as Boundary Bay, which connects Point Roberts, USA to the BC mainland.

Last year, 1.5 million cars (carrying an average of just under two people per vehicle) crossed into Canada from the US. Of this total, 1.2 million entered the country through border crossings in Mainland/Southwest. More than half of them (782,000) used the Douglas and Pacific Highway crossings, near the Peace Arch at White Rock.

Kootenay has more points of entry for road traffic than any other region[3], and welcomed 160,500 US automobiles in 2007. Another 67,000 vehicles drove across the border into Thompson/Okanagan, which has two ports of entry (Osoyoos and Chopaka). Canadian customs facilities at ferry terminals in Vancouver Island/Coast (at Sidney and downtown Victoria) handled 53,400 American cars in 2007, while the North Coast ports of Prince Rupert and Stewart processed 19,900 during the year. The regional distribution of traffic from the US into BC has remained relatively stable during the last two decades.

[3] There are nine ports of entry into Kootenay including Carson, Cascade, Kingsgate, Midway, Nelway, Paterson, Roosville, Rykerts and Waneta.

BC road border crossings second-busiest in the country

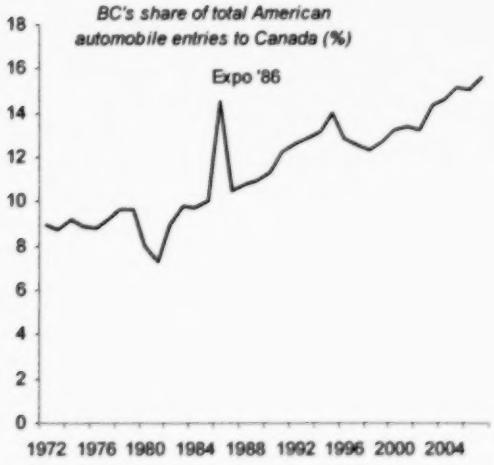
BC customs ports handle more automobile traffic from the US than any other province except Ontario, which was the point of entry for 65% of the US cars that were driven into Canada in 2007. Customs ports in BC (16%) handled the second-highest number of vehicles, while Quebec ports (8%) were the third busiest in the country, followed closely by border crossings in New Brunswick (just under 8%).

Automobile traffic declining, but not as much as in the rest of Canada

Most of the decline in US visitor entries since the turn of the century can be explained by the fact that fewer visitors from the States are driving to Canada. The number of automobile entries from the US is currently at its lowest point since the mid-1980s. Entries from the US had increased significantly after Expo '86 was held in Vancouver, but have fallen back to pre-1986 levels. Same-day car traffic has been halved since 2000, and the number of Americans making overnight car trips north of the border is down to 77% of the 2000 level.

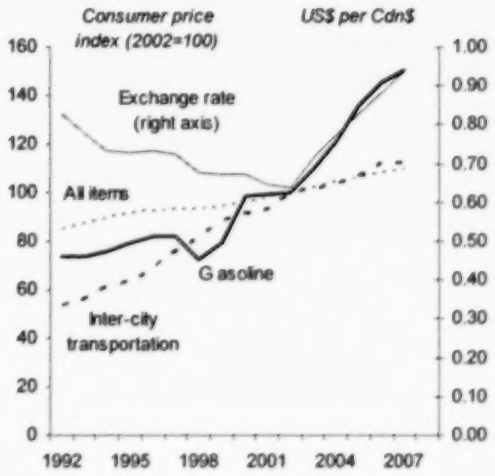
Although automobile traffic into BC from the US has dropped steeply since the turn of the century, the downturn has not been as extreme as in other parts of the country. As a result, BC's share of total automobile traffic from the US has continued to rise.

BC's share of automobile trips from the US to Canada continues to rise



Data Source: Statistics Canada

Gasoline and inter-city transportation costs are climbing



Data Source: Statistics Canada

Longer wait times at the border in the wake of 9/11, the rising cost of gasoline, and a weaker US dollar that makes travel to Canada less of a bargain are all factors that may have contributed to the drop in travel from the US, as well as the change in the mode of travel used by Americans visiting BC. The cost of intercity transportation in British Columbia (air, train, bus and boat) has risen far less than gasoline prices during the last ten years, and this may have played a role in travel decisions made by Americans visiting the province.

In the current climate of a slowing US economy, high fuel prices and security concerns, it is not clear whether the province will be able to woo back visitors from the US in numbers similar to those seen prior to the turn of the century. Despite the downturn in US entries, BC has fared better than the rest of Canada and is continuing to attract a growing share of American motorists who choose to cross the border into Canada.

Statistics Canada's Survey Skills Workshops

Call for our workshop calendar!

Survey Sampling & Questionnaire Design

This workshop will provide you with the proper tools necessary to prepare a survey that gets results! Learn to maximize the value of your survey results by selecting a sample that truly represents your population. Learn how to design an effective questionnaire that will give you the information you need.

Workshop Topics include:

Survey Planning

- Five steps to formulate your information needs
- Fundamentals of collecting data and maximizing your response rates

Sampling Methods

- Sample types—simple random; systematic; stratified; cluster and multi-stage samples; area frames and intercept surveys
- Factors affecting sample size

Questionnaires

- Motivating response and minimizing error
- Questionnaire design—how to avoid common pitfalls in wording, sequencing and layout
- Question structure—open and closed questions, multiple choice, checklist, ranking, rating
- Processing survey responses

VANCOUVER

October 20-21, 2008
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Room 201, Library Square
300 West Georgia St.

Light refreshments will be served throughout the day

Register early as space is limited

Fee is $550 + GST

Early registration: $499 + GST (at least 3 weeks prior)

Learn from the Survey Experts!!

REGISTRATION

FT

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Visa__ M/C__ Amex__ Cheque__ Amount $ (incl. GST): _____

Card No: _____

Cardholder: _____ Expiry. Date: _____

Signature: _____

Fed. Gov. Dept#: _____ Org#: _____ Ref#: _____

Return form with payment to:

Workshop Registrar
Statistics Canada
Suite 600, 300 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 6C7
Tel: (604) 666-1851
Fax: (604) 666-6680
Toll Free Fax: (877) 287-4369

Make Cheque and Money Orders Payable to '**Receiver General of Canada**'

Refund Policy—Registrations are guaranteed once payment is received. Fees will be refunded, less $75 administration charge, if written notice is received at least 3 business days prior to the workshop. Substitutions are permitted at any time.

Statistics Canada will only use your information to complete this sales transaction, deliver your product(s), announce product updates and administer your account. From time to time we may offer you other Statistics Canada products and services or ask you to participate in our market research. If you do not wish to be contacted again for ☐ promotional purposes ☐ and/or market research, check as appropriate and fax or mail this page to us, call (780) 495-8578 or e-mail prairies.info@statcan.gc.ca

Aussi disponible en français

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Canada

Infoline

Email transmission information service from BC Stats

also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

September 12, 2008
Issue 08–37

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/08	% change on one year ago
BC	4,428.4	1.5
Canada	33,223.8	1.1
GDP and INCOME (Revised Apr 28)		
(BC - at market prices)	2007	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	190,214	5.5
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	163,200	3.1
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita)*	37,258	1.7
Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)*	24,728	3.0
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Jun	3,379	-2.1
Merchandise Exports - Jun	2,895	3.1
Retail Sales - Jun	4,844	1.3
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on	12-month avg
(all items - Jul 2008)	one year ago	% change
BC	3.3	1.7
Vancouver	3.6	1.9
Victoria	2.9	1.2
Canada	3.4	2.3
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Aug '08	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,429	-0.1
Employed - BC	2,325	0.0
Unemployed - BC	104	-3.1
		Jul '08
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	4.3	4.4
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	6.1	6.1
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Sep 3/08	Sep 5/07
Prime Business Rate	4.75	6.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.65	7.05
- 5 year	6.85	7.24
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Sep 3/08	Sep 5/07
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.0607	1.0508
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.9425	0.9492
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Aug '08	one year ago
BC	777.68	2.8
Canada	788.85	3.5

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Immigration & Diversity Profiles

The WelcomeBC site now features two series of graphic profiles based on the 2006 Census. Over 200 individual documents in each series reveal the characteristics of British Columbia, its regions, and communities.

www.welcomebc.ca/en/growing_your_community/trends/2006/

NEW: RSS enabled for our site

We now have two RSS feeds for our users. One provides updates for just our analytical articles; the other is for everything we do, including the analytical articles, but also announcements, data releases, and publications.

Analytical articles:
www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/rss/analytical.ashx

Everything:
www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/rss/everythingnew.ashx

Improved: Article Index on site

Access BC Stats' reports and publications through a searchable database. Searches can be performed by subject, author, publication or date. Link to this page by choosing **Reports & Publications** near the bottom of our left sidebar.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/guide.asp

Released this week by BC Stats

- Exports, July 2008

Next week

- Tourism Sector Monitor, August 2008
- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 2nd Quarter 2008

BC Stats, Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BC.Stats@gov.bc.ca